Development of Chawandia Limestone Project by N.M.D.C.

*573. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) what are the terms, conditions and scope of the contract alongwith its value and time schedule of execution awarded by the National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. for the development of Chawandia Limestone Project;

(b) whether the award has been given in violation of the laws of the Contract Labour Regulation and Abolition Act;

(c) whether the cost of production is not going to match with the prices available with the buyers as at present;

(d) whether absence of marketing tie up is indicative of the prospective losses to be suffered by the National Mineral Development Corporation Limited;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) whether any steps would be taken to avoid employment of contract labour and also for cancellation of the contract?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) The National Mineral Development Corporation Limited (NMDC) has undertaken the development of Chawandia Limestone Project in the State of Rajasthan so as to meet the requirement of limenstone for the domestic steel industry and other users. The scope of the contract awarded to a private contractor by the company includes supply of required mining machinery and related equipment of payment of hire charges, operation/ maintenance of the ore processing plant installed by NMDC and transportation of ore to railway siding and loading of material in railway wagons. The Contractor will supply the required mining machinery in good working condition to give required productivity, and hire charges are payable on an hourly basis linked to productivity for the acutal utilisation of the equipment/machinery by the Company.

The anticipated value of the contract is about Rs. 3.47 crores per annum for a period of 3 years commencing from 4.12.93 for the rate of production of about 2.4 lakh tonnes of Seized Low Silica limestone per year which may vary based on actual production required.

(b) In view of the Notification No. SO. 707 dated 17th March, 1993 issued by the Ministry of Labour under the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, the validity of the contract is being examined and on the basis of legal advice if required; the contract will be suitably amended to ensure that no provisions of the aboxe Act are violated.

(c) to (e) The economic viabilitly; marketing and other related aspects have been duly considered by the company before taking up the project and it is anticipated that the project would be profitable. Marketing of part of the production has already been tied up and the rest is in process.

(f) As indicated in the answer to part (b) above.

Oilseed Production in Saurashtra Region

*574. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the oilseed production scaled down in Saurashtra region;

(b) what is the estimated country-wide total production of groundnut and soya seeds in the year 1994-95;

(c) whether the estimate has been less than the target and earlier forecast made in this regard;

(d) whether there has been any indication of hike in groundnut and

soya oil seeds price due to shortfall in production;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) whether there is any proposal to import edible oils during the year?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The agriculture year 1994-95 is yet to begin. However, the total production of groundnut and soyaseed (i.e. soyabean) in the country for the year 1993-94 is expected to be around 76.0 and 47.2 lakh tonnes respectively.

(c) The production of rabi groundnut and soyabean in the country for the year 1993-94 is expected to be higher than that of target as well as earlier forecast made in this regard. However, the production of groundnut in kharif season 1993-94 is likely to fall below the targetad level.

(d) and (e) There has been some increase in the prices of groundnut and soyabean recently as indicated in the table below:—

(Base 1981-82=100)

	Groundnut	Soyabean
February, 1994	227.5	298.1
March, 1994	223.3	297.5
16th April, 1994 (Latest available)	256.2	307.0

(f) The Government has decided to import Palmolein for distribution under Public Distribution System (PDS) in order to contain the price rise of edible oils. In order to augment the supplies of edible oils, the Government has also put import of palmolein under Open General Licence (OGL).

Demand for treating agriculture as Industry

*575. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the farmers are demanding that agriculture be treated as industry;

(b) if so, what are the implications of this demand; and

(c) whether the above demand suggests that land holdings be considered as the capital against which term loans be granted on the lines on which advances are granted to small, middle and big industrialists and that working capital be also granted on the same lines?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): (a) and (b) There has been a general demand for treating agriculture at par with industry which would imply extending benefits to agriculture sector as exist in industry.

(c) Yes, Sir.